



punch

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CC No. 5210

January 22 1941

Charivaria

THE fear is expressed in Germany that America will now arm herself to HITLER's back teeth.

"It is time to think of digging up the kitchen garden again," says a writer. At least, turn it over in your mind.

Mr. GANDHI recently stated that he did not wish to embarrass the British in any way. As a reciprocal gesture, instructions have been given not to get the Mahatma's goat.



A correspondent complains that he is never able to give himself a really close shave. He should try standing nearer to the razor.

A correspondent reports that there was a good fire in his station waiting-room the other morning until an absent-minded porter rushed in and threw sand on it.

"Vegetarians have hearty laughs," says a writer. Especially now.



President ROOSEVELT seems to be about the worst President of America the German pessimists ever had.

when Bardia fell they started on their journey to Rome to resign.

British troops in Libya found egg-beating machines in an abandoned officers' mess kitchen. The electric whiskers had gone.

A gossip-writer mentions that it was so dark the other evening on his way home that he could not see his hand in front of his face. Never mind, perhaps it wasn't there.

A writer wonders what Signor MUSSOLINI would do if he landed in Ireland. He would be well advised to kiss the Blarney Stone right away.

Coming Events

7.45 THE NATIONAL ANTHEMS OF THE ALLIES.

9.0 Time, Big Ben: NEWS."

Consecutive items in radio programme announcement.

Now that Germany and Russia have signed another pact of friendship the massing of Nazi and Soviet troops on the frontiers may be regarded as just another coincidence.

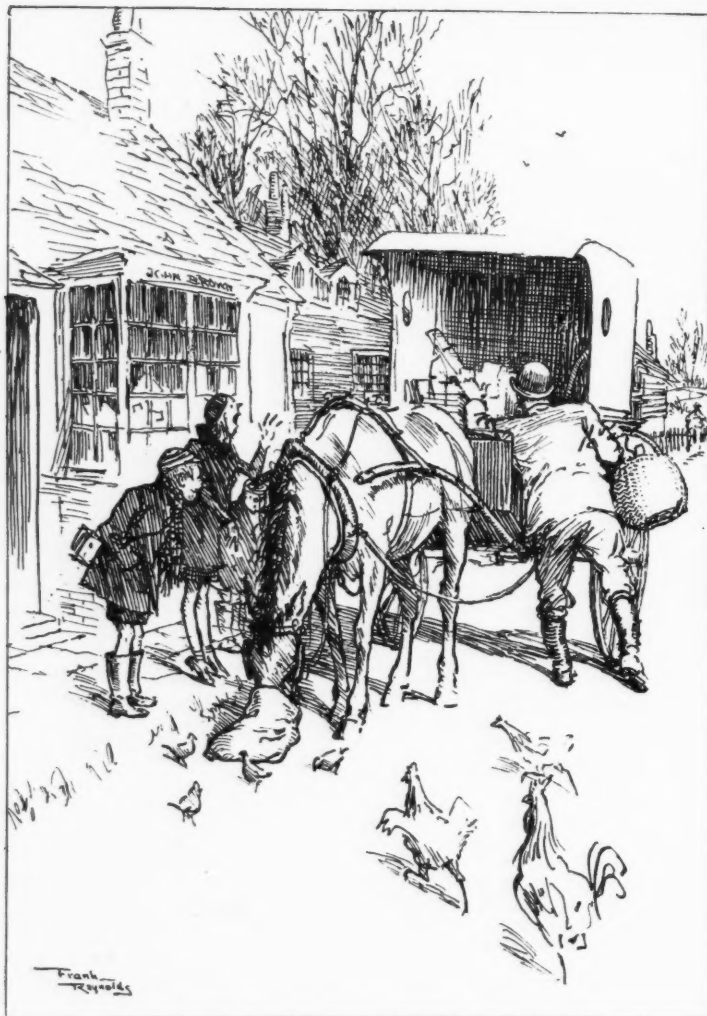


"GATES GOING UP"

Daily Mail.

What's the use of that with railings coming down?

A Swiss phrenologist learns that Signor MUSSOLINI's head has grown a quarter of an inch in eight years. This sort of thing of course plays havoc with one's halo.



"Oi! Your 'orse can't get 'is gas-mask on!"

Home Guard Goings-On

Up to Now

THE "Review of the Year" has been jumping out at us from our newspapers as usual, and our wireless-sets and the news-reels have been cramming the achievements of the Navy, the Army and the R.A.F. into a few reminiscent minutes. We of the Home Guard feel no resentment at getting merely an honourable mention in these compressed chronicles; we have had more than our share of publicity at one time and another, and, after all, we haven't a whole year to review.

It must also be admitted that our part in the struggle has been passive rather than active so far; it has been given only to a glorious minority to deal sternly with grounded enemy airmen or to explode the back tyres of disobedient motorists; and although one or two of us have even been decorated, there are still roughly seventeen hundred thousand who have not.

Yet we have not been standing still (unless ordered to do so, and even then only as long as it pleased us). As little

Mr. King said when we sat waiting for a Christmas Night invasion, "Things is different with us now than what they was when us joined." And us had to agree that they was. Mr. Punnett illustrated the point by declaring himself eager for the chance to "bust a dozen 'Uns in small bits" with his bare hands—a bloodthirsty ambition partly prompted by the small glass of port which had represented his seasonable excesses, but nevertheless bearing witness to his translation from L. Punnett, bespoke tailor and man of peace, to Volunteer Punnett, potential instrument of violent justice.

What is true of Mr. Punnett is true, *mutatis mutandis*, of us all. The loving care which Mr. King, a professional gardener and gentlest of creatures, once lavished on his fork (or "prong" as he would call it) has been transferred to his rifle and bayonet. Mr. Tucker, of The Corner Pharmacy, sets his prescriptions aside to perfect a smoke-screen formula against the improbable event of our wishing to retire unnoticed to "prepared positions." Consider Mr. Curtis, who used to sit in his Manager's Consulting Room defending the bank's interests with nothing more deadly than a shake of the head and a quiet negative: now he keeps a copy of *Rifle Training for War* on the shelf beside *The Practise and Law of Banking*. Note how our Section Leader, casting aside a lawyer's natural desire to settle all differences by negotiation only, has lately come to favour methods far removed from either law or order.

The iron has, in the best possible sense for present purposes, entered into our souls. It is to be hoped, in passing, that we shall all be able to get it out again when it has served its purpose.

It seems more than a few months ago since we confessed to our wives, a little diffidently, that we were thinking of joining these "er—parashots"—an economically-minded Press had lost no time in finding us a sobriquet; and it seems half a lifetime ago that we gathered together, like a lot of new boys, under the leadership of Mr. Cobbing the grocer, the first of our long line of Platoon Commanders. We filled in our enrolment forms with false bravado, and experienced an unpleasant chill in the stomach when loaded rifles were entrusted to us with every confidence.

The rifles, loaded or not, took as much getting used to as anything. Some of us were a little slow in distinguishing between the trigger and the safety-catch, and six months ago the sound of shots by night was as familiar as the hullabaloo of Jim

Archer's ducks and attracted as little attention; people shrugged, accepting the fact that another hole had been blown in the floorboards at H.Q. by a careless Volunteer (or, in the case of a particularly careless Volunteer, in the front door or the dart-board). But a rifle-shot nowadays would alarm the whole village. We have learned to respect our weapons, and are allowed to go off on Sunday mornings and fire them on purpose, instead of loosing them off in the small hours by mistake. The village has adapted itself to the quiet again—as far as rifle-shots are concerned.

We have a rifle each now (at first we had half a dozen between fifty), and on the strength of our familiarity with their foibles we are permitted to keep them at home. It is recommended by the authorities, however, that their bolts should be removed while they are standing idle in our kitchens and shop-parlours, and concealed from our wives and little ones. Over-conscientiousness in this matter has sometimes resulted in Volunteers parading boltless and ashamed, their own ingenious hiding-places having proved too much for them. Mr. Benn, for instance, paraded one night with the news that his wife and a neighbour were devoting the evening to searching his house from roof to cellar for rifle-bolts, and he was only mildly relieved when he sat down to eat his supper and the missing piece of mechanism burst its way devastatingly through the hip-pocket of his inner trousers.

Amongst ourselves the year has been a peaceful one. Apart from a few allegations of greed over particularly desirable bits of equipment, a little over-zealous rivalry between Sections, and one or two inevitable outbreaks of hurt feelings, the course of duty has remained unruffled. The only serious difference of opinion arose at a meeting of Section Leaders, and was resolved by no less surprising a mediator than the *Luftwaffe*. The Section Leaders were holding a trestle-table conference in the Village Hall, and the point at issue was whether the Platoon's mass craving for tin hats was sufficiently justified to warrant an appeal to a High Authority, Low Authorities having appeared unwilling to help. An equal division of opinion had led to harsh words; the table had been thumped by all concerned; there had even been talk of resignations. Then an unheralded bomb fell close at hand and the Council of War found itself under the table instead of round it—and very glad to be there too. Dignity was lost, dissension was doomed, and harmony was restored in a fanfare of

apologies and retractions. We have begun to get the tin hats now.

Looking back, it seems as if our military education has been marked off into periods by consignments of equipment. At first when we had only an armlet to distinguish us from the common run and to protect us from both enemy and elements, we complained bitterly that we deserved better of the Ministry of Supply; yet in our heart of hearts we knew that we did not; an armlet was all we were fit for then, and two Volunteers who took to strolling self-importantly up and down the High Street in forage-caps bought out of their own pockets were put suitably in their place by a passing corporal, who pointed out that they were both wearing them back-to-front. By the time we were issued with caps officially we were getting a grip of the rough essentials. Then we began to complain bitterly because we had no uniforms. Properly enough, we had learnt the rudiments of drill before

they arrived, and although we immediately began to complain bitterly about the lack of greatcoats and boots, we had to break into the realm of mild field-exercises before we earned these.

In the same way a little target-practice and a little more complaining brought us more rifles and more ammunition; smarter drill brought us bayonets and badges for our caps. And we have now reached such a pitch of all-round efficiency that we have gradually accumulated, and are expected to carry about with us, sufficient arms and equipment to repel an invasion single-handed and at a moment's notice. It is very heavy, very cumbersome, and needs an alarming amount of cleaning; needless to say, we complain about this very bitterly indeed.

There is scarcely anything else left to complain about—except that there are some of us who do rather fancy a couple of light tanks.



"Parkinson's Self-Tutor, Simple Songs for Beginners, Viennese Waltz Medley, Chopin's Preludes, Brahms's Concerto in B flat, and a grand piano, please."

The Scout

THEY are not long, the years since man was forming,
Since Big Ground thundered at the "brick" round
goal,*
Where cool decision stood against the storming
And youth revealed the image of the soul.

They are not long, the years since Town was ringing
With careless cheers that were illusion's knell;
For memory hears the echo of their singing
Of "Good-bye, Dolly" and "My Own Bluebell."

It is not long since, in the century's May-time,
Ingenuous thousands mafficked through the night,
And did not know this was the end of playtime
Before the coming of the foulest fight.

They had not died, the tumult and the shouting,
When he was horsed and out, though statesmen stared,
To cross the dawn's horizons, ever scouting,
Track down the foe, and bid us be prepared.

o o

Giving No Trouble

WHEN do you like your bath—night or morning?"
"It makes no difference to me at all. Either.
Whichever is most convenient. Or neither."

"But it makes no difference to us either, so do say."

"Honestly, I don't mind."

"Then shall we say in the morning? And you'll be called
at eight o'clock, if that suits you?"

"That will be *perfect*."

"Oh—wait a minute—I'm so sorry, but I think we'd
better say quarter to eight, if we're to—"

"Quarter to eight would be *perfect*."

"And there's just one more thing—do you prefer tea or
coffee?"

"Either."

"Both are there."

"I like both."

"You don't mean that you drink both at the same meal,
do you?"

"No, no. Unless that would make things easier and
give less trouble."

"Good heavens, no! I only want to know which you
like best."

"I've *no* choice."

"You must have."

"No, really. Whichever is least—"

"But they're *both* there, so neither is any trouble."

"It's all one to me, really and truly. I only want not to
be a nuisance."

"Well, which do you drink at home?"

"Either."

"I see. Then perhaps you'll feel more able to decide
when breakfast-time comes. Now, if we have an air-raid
warning, do you prefer to go to the shelter or stay in bed?
Most people just stay in bed."

"How kind of you to think of me!"

"But of course we must think of you. The little shelter
is quite comfortable and warm."

* Lord BADEN-POWELL played goal for Charterhouse.

"It sounds marvellous."

"But of course I hope your bed will be quite comfortable
and warm too; and many people sleep through the Alert
and the All-Clear and everything."

"How lovely!"

"Then you'd rather be left in peace?"

"I don't really mind. Whichever gives least trouble."

"Please don't think of that. My aunt always goes to the
shelter, and so does the cook."

"It sounds perfect."

"Do you think so? My aunt doesn't. But do go there
if you'd rather."

"But I don't really mind in the very least. I'm just as
happy in bed."

"Do you mean that you might sleep through the Alert,
like my husband and the twins and the house-parlourmaid?"

"That sounds marvellous."

"Then we'll leave you undisturbed."

"Whichever gives least trouble, please."

"Please don't think of that. Would you or would you
not like my aunt to knock on your door as she goes by—
if we *do* have an Alert?"

"Honestly, I'd like her to do whichever is easiest for her."

"I see. Then we'll tell her to decide, shall we?"

"That would be ideal."

"Of course the chances are we shall hear nothing. It's
very quiet down here."

"How lovely!"

"Sometimes we hear them overhead of course."

"How horrid! Do you *really*? But they won't worry me
in the *least*, so long as I don't feel I'm giving you any
trouble."

"I don't really think, whatever they did, that *you* could
be accused of giving trouble. I mean, they'd be Hitler's
bombs, wouldn't they—not yours."

"Still, I shouldn't like to think of your taking any
trouble about me if anything *did* happen."

"My husband is an A.R.P. official and I'm sure he'd feel
bound to do something about you."

"I can't bear the thought of being a nuisance."

"Well, we'd better just hope that there won't be any
air-raid."

"That would be perfect."

"We've never had one yet, though my aunt declares we
shall before the end."

"That would be marvellous. I mean, your aunt is very
brave, isn't she?"

"We may know better later on whether she is or not."

"That would be perfect."

"Now, wouldn't you like to go to bed? I'm sure you're
tired."

"Thank you. Whatever you do yourself."

"Then I'll just take you up to your room."

"Oh no, no, no! *Please* don't let me give you any trouble."

"I wish you wouldn't—"

"Oh, but I should be so wretched! My only wish is to
be *no* trouble. Put me anywhere."

"Very well. Then I suggest that you should spend the
night lying out on the middle of the lawn in pouring rain."

E. M. D.

o o

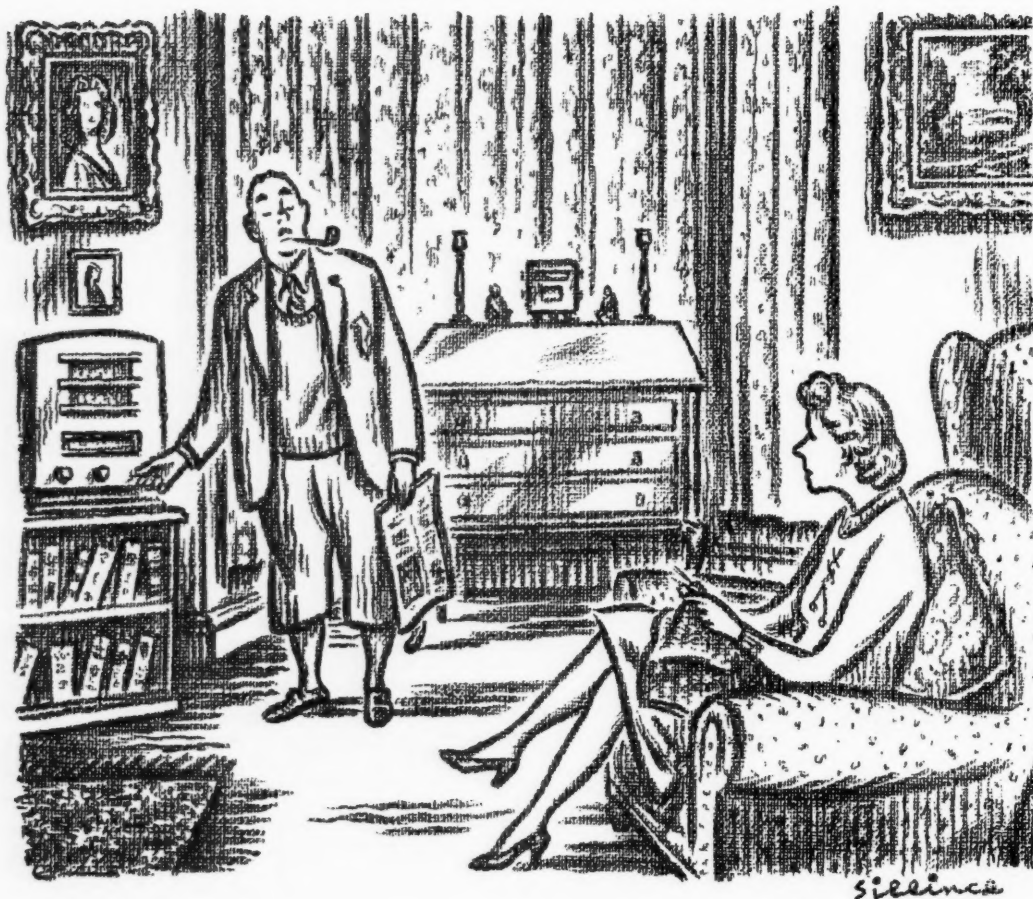
Black-Out in the Near East

AWAKE! Who is the Warden on to-night?
Awake, awake! Are all the Servants tight?
Showing for miles across the Desert's face
The Sultan's Turret is a blaze of Light!



BIG FIRE CHIEF

"Then felt I like some watcher of the skies. . ."



"Would you rather bear London and Hamburg or London and Paris?"

Trunk Call

THERE is horrible in manual labour," said Charles, who read *How Green Was My Valley* rather late

"There is very ugly in dead old trees standing about the place," I answered.

"Eh, there is selfish in luring old brothers-in-law with lunches and giving them silly axes instead of second glasses of port."

"There is lunatic in buying firewood with great timber waiting on being burnt."

"What's to stop the damned thing falling into the road?"

"Only the woodman's skill. It mustn't fall into the road. It's a

military road and we'd find ourselves in the Tower if we blocked it."

"Oughtn't we to work out its height and see how far afield it would go?"

"If we knew how."

"You do something to the hypotenuse."

"I certainly won't. The public is particularly requested not to annoy the hypotenuse."

"Whose honour is it?"

"You're the visiting team."

Charles seized the axe and gave it a few wristy twiddles.

"In case I hole out in one," he said, "are we agreed the blow should land by that sort of carbuncle?"

"Absolutely," I told him. "Lay on."

His gentle shuddering, which had been a common spectacle on too many golf-courses in the stymieing times of peace, caught him in its strange grip and left him some seconds later pale and staring. He then closed his eyes and swung sturdily. The blade bit into the tree.

"I axe you very confidentially, ain't that neat?" he sang.

"There was powerful," I agreed.

"How do you get an axe out again?" he asked.

"You pull." We both pulled, but nothing happened.

"What we want is a big wooden mallet," said Charles.

"Who do you think's got a big

wooden mallet on a Sunday afternoon?"

"What's happened to that Croquet Club they started?"

"It was liquidated after the Crimean War. Let's use one of your shoes."

Like many a man with huge feet Charles screws jagged lumps of pig-iron round his shoes to make them really heavy. Even so it took six bangs to get the axe into play again.

"Let me show you," I said.

"I'm sure we want a lighter club," Charles declared. "What Mr. Gladstone really said was 'Boy, my Number Three.'"

With admirable co-ordination of hand and eye I dealt the tree a staggering blow. The axe jammed firmly and a stout strip of bark came crashing down on to our heads. As it did so it uncovered a whole storm-troop of centipedes taking the weight off their feet. I don't know how you feel about centipedes, but the bows and stems of these were identical and their faces glowered down at us out of a kind of abdominal battle-turret.

"They make Himmler seem quite pretty," said Charles.

"I always knew country life was beastly," I said.

"That one with the thing round his neck is giving us a look."

"He's the Mayor. We've probably disturbed the Watch and Ward Committee."

"I don't expect that old devil's ever put a foot wrong in local politics."

"About this axe," I said. "I'm going in to get the double-handed saw."

"Get some dynamite," urged Charles, "it's labour-saving."

We took off our coats and sawed steadily for some minutes, choosing a slant which should fell the monster well within the field. Then we stopped to give the spots in front of our eyes a rest.

"Trees might so easily have been made of something soft, like nougat," Charles gasped.

"We're nearly halfway through."

"Do you mind if I go in and send myself a wire? Gosh—look out!"

It all happened very quickly. One instant my tree was obstinately vertical, the next it was thunderously flat. And slap across the road.

"One thing," said Charles brightly, "the soldiery don't seem to be using this road any more."

"It's Sunday. Wait till the morning."

"Then why not get through to the Adjutant and suggest he comes and clears it away?"

I rang up the camp and connected with a little voice that might have

been speaking from the Orkneys through a telephone filled with porridge.

"Adjutant here."

I explained about the tree.

"Tea? Thanks very much, but I'm on duty. Who are you?"

"I said 'tree,'" I yelled.

"Tree? Can't say I remember you. What's that? You fell across a road? Yes, but where? I mean, the thing's common enough."

I hung up. I tried our police-station.

"I dare say Mr. Barbpole has just gone off for one of his nice long bicycle rides?" I said.

"Well, as a matter of fact he 'as," Mrs. Barbpole admitted.

I tried the urban police and was reminded kindly that I was not in their area.

"One of these nights I'm going to be murdered in the wrong area," I told them as I rang off.

"I hope you will be," said Charles. "The only thing we can do with the immediate corpse is to shove some red lights on it and hope for the best. It's getting dark already."

We were crossing the yard in search of lanterns when we became aware of more curious goings-on than usual on the common beyond. Much rustling and whispering was evident, and the gorse was heavy with oaths.

"Home Guard manoeuvres," said

Charles. "What a break!" As he said it a small detachment rose from the common and assembled on the road behind the tree. Charles strode benevolently towards them.

"Smart work of your advance party," he cried, "but I'm a little worried about the morning. Are you in charge?"

"I am," said an officer. "To tell you the truth I knew nothing about this tree."

"It's always the same in the best manoeuvres. But I'm quite happy so long as you don't mind being responsible for clearing the road before you go."

"Oh, of course," said the officer doubtfully.

"You're going to have an awful job rolling it."

"Afraid we are. Sawing might be easier." He hesitated. "You haven't a big double-handed saw, by any chance?"

Charles turned to me.

"We haven't a big double-handed saw, have we, Scroggins?"

"I dur say oi could foind un, zur," I said.

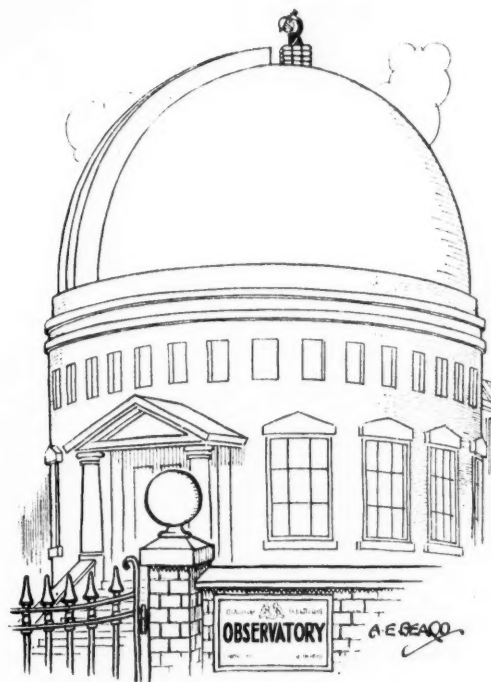
ERIC.

o o

Announcement

"Provision of deep shelters was by no means as easy as it appeared on the surface."

Report of a speech.



At the Pictures

WHAT THEY WANTED

CHARLES LAUGHTON has his best part for years in *They Knew What They Wanted* (Director: GARSON KANIN), which is rather misleadingly advertised as a "comedy-drama." There is more and stronger drama here than that designation usually implies; although the comedy is equally important, and done with equal brilliance. My only complaint is that I want to see CAROLE LOMBARD in a flippant film again, not in these emotional things. When do we get another *Twentieth Century* or *Nothing Sacred*? Two or three months ago I overheard a hard-headed business man in Leeds having the effrontery to say *Twentieth Century* was rotten, but do all pictures have to be designed for Leeds business men with heads as hard as that?

Never mind. Miss LOMBARD does very well, I admit, in her part here as the San Francisco waitress who goes into the country to marry Tony (Mr. LAUGHTON), the simple, cheerful, kind-hearted Italian vineyard-owner who has proposed to her by letter. She has never seen him; her friend in the cash-desk points out despairingly "You don't know what you're getting into!" but with great bitterness she replies "I know what I'm getting out of, don't I?"

The drama arises from the presence of the vineyard foreman (WILLIAM GARGAN—his best part for years, too), a love-'em-and-leave-'em type who seduces her. This is a good picture, absorbing, entertaining, well played and directed and full of admirable unobtrusive touches. I particularly liked the handling of the crowd after Tony's accident: the camera follows the people as they mill from window to window peering in at the injured man being carried along inside the house. And Mr. LAUGHTON is a joy to watch throughout.

If you like what is often called "sweep" with your drama, try *Brigham Young* (Director: HENRY HATHAWAY). Nominally the story of the great man, this is really for the most part another spectacular cross-country trek: the horses battling across rivers with the wagons, the dying old woman refusing to hold up the general progress, the murmuring against the leader's apparently crazy determination—you know. The Indians, even; but here we have their presence merely and there is no

climactic scene involving thousands of seagulls; but there are also big acting opportunities, particularly for the principal character, who is presented memorably and with power by DEAN JAGGER. The one thing everybody knows about the Mormons is not at all emphasized, and we see only one other Mrs. Young besides Mary Ann, Brigham's "favourite wife," well and movingly played by MARY ASTOR.

All the newspaper talk about *Spring*

Parade (Director: HENRY KOSTER) seems to have concentrated on that petticoat scene, in which DEANNA DURBIN steps out of one after another. It gets a cheap easy laugh; but for the notices of a DURBIN picture to pick out something that an automaton, going through the same motions, could make equally amusing, does imply a certain poverty of imagination about the whole affair. Are we to assume that now Miss DURBIN is irrevocably grown-up her films are liable to be as inane as anybody else's?

No, that's too strong: *Spring Parade* is better than that; but it is not much above the ordinary Vienna-waltz-and-whimsy story to which we are all so accustomed, and Miss DURBIN, natural and charming as ever in the part of an Austrian peasant girl, has little chance to be more. The outstanding performance here is that of S. Z. SAKALL as a

benevolent old baker, though the cast list is full of better-known names.

The current Western presents WAL-LACE BEERY as "the shoot'n'est man since Grant took Richmond"—in other words the *Bad Man of Wyoming* (Director: RICHARD THORPE). There is little out of the ordinary here either: riding, shooting and fighting just after the Civil War, when, it seems, the comic golden-hearted tough played by Mr. BEERY did much more than the authorities to clear the really nasty crooks out of Wyoming; but I quite enjoyed it.

R. M.

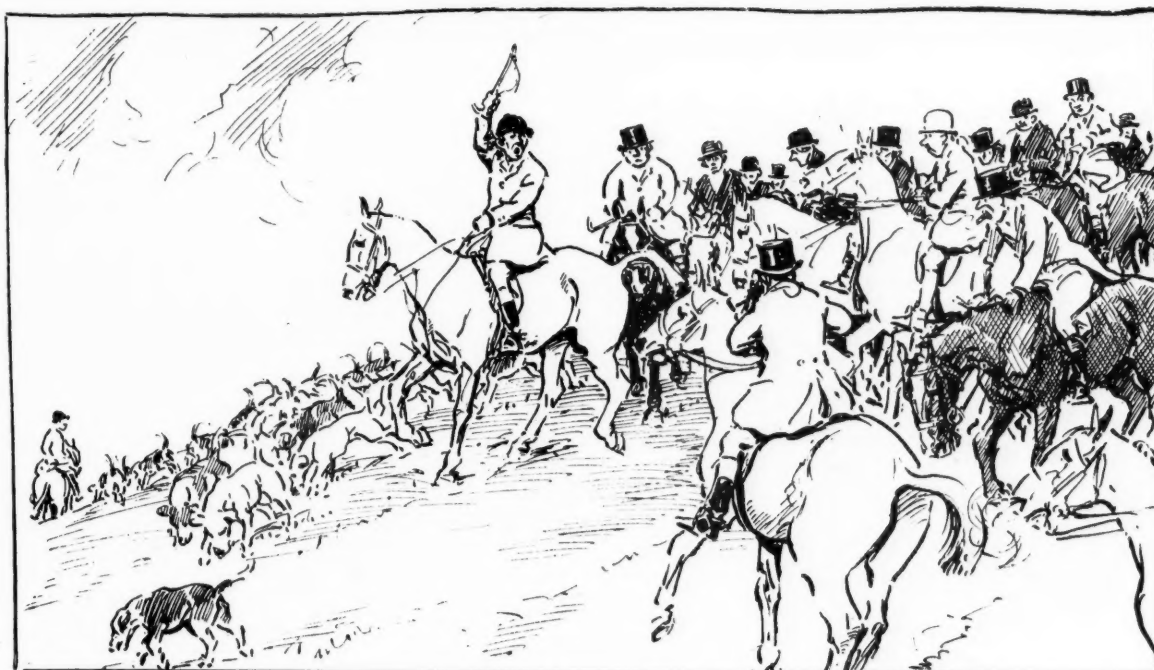


(*They Knew What They Wanted*)

PAIRED BY POST

Amy CAROLE LOMBARD
Tony CHARLES LAUGHTON

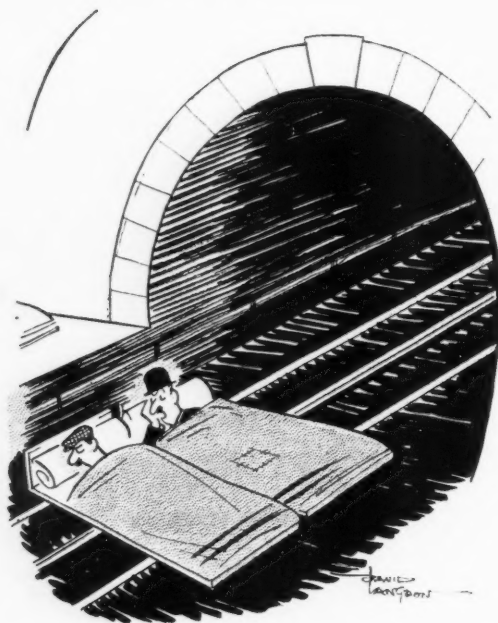
question of fighting them, for they are the only people encountered by the Mormons who treat them in the way they ask to be treated, by letting them alone. Other white men regard *Brigham Young* and his people as the welcome excuse for a lynching party; they are persecuted wherever they try to live, and this picture is the story of how they wandered westward from Illinois to the desolate plain of Salt Lake, where they settled, toiled, and after great hardship built their city. The main point of the picture is spectacle: there is a magnificent



PEACE



WAR



"I reckon I'd sleep much better if I knew what time the first train comes through."

Fire-Watcher in Lambeth

MRS. PINKIN glanced at the clock in the living-room of 61, Cosham House, Lambeth. "Alf-pars' six!" she said incredulously. "As there bin a warnin', Tillie?"

"No, Ma," said Miss Tillie Pinkin. "Not yet. Feelin' impatient?"

"Then 'The Fletchers Arms' can't 'ave bin bombed," Mrs. Pinkin said, "so w'y's y'r Dad comin' in this early?"

"P'raps 'e can't bear bein' parted from you," Tillie suggested.

"I never knoo y'r middle name was 'Ans Andersen," Mrs. Pinkin said dryly. "That you, Pa?" she shouted.

"No!" Mr. Pinkin called from the hall. "It's 'Itler come ter steal the plans of Putney 'Arbour." He came into the room. "I gotta s'p'ose for you," he said.

"Pawned your watch: an' bought a onion?" Tillie inquired.

"Come orf it!" said Mr. Pinkin. "It's not *that* valu'ble, not wiv the gold gorn green like it 'as. No," he continued, "I'm gointer be a fire-watcher."

"You've bin one mos' winter's nights since I've known you," said Mrs. Pinkin, "wiv y'r pipe in y'r mouth an' y'r feet on the fender."

"Nice ter know there's no shortage of vinigar, any'ow," Mr. Pinkin said. "But listen! When a incendiary bomb falls on a buildin' an' no one don't take no notice of it, one of two things 'appens—either the place burns up or it burns down. See?"

"My, my!" said Mrs. Pinkin. "We live an' learn, don't we?"

"But if there's enough putter-outers," Mr. Pinkin said, "instead of the Loofwoff bein' able ter see wot's where, they won't be no better orf than if they 'ad a petrol-lighter. See?"

"That'll make Gorin' mad," Tillie said—"people tryin' to 'ide 'is light under a bushel. But won't you 'ave to be trained first?"

"Y'r Dad don't need no trainin'," Mrs. Pinkin said. "Even when 'e tries ter *light* a fire it don't burn. Give 'im a scuttle of coal an' a poker, an' I reckon 'e'd put out Viscoovius. When d'you start, Pa?"

"To-night," said Mr. Pinkin. "So if me supper's ready I'll 'ave it now."

Mrs. Pinkin began to set the table. "The way to a man's 'eart may be froo 'is stomach," she said, "but it's time someone invented a perminent way an' saved us 'ousewives from bein' a 'ole-time repair gang."

There was a loud knock at the door.

"Wonder 'oo that is?" Tillie said. "Can't be the butcher wiv the joint, else 'e'd slip it froo the letter-box."

The caller was Mrs. Bella Stusser.

"Is on'y liddle me, Missis Pinkin," she said as she squeezed herself through the door. "Podden me to innarupt you, but soch a row I have with my man so if I stay home another minnit is two minnits too long."

"Devenin'," said Mr. Pinkin. "Sorry to 'ear you've 'ad words wiv y'r 'usband."

"Vords!" Mrs. Stusser exclaimed. "Is more than *vords*. Is terrible expressions. Soch expressions a lady who understands them isn't one!"

"Wot 'appened?" said Mrs. Pinkin.

Mrs. Stusser sat down. "Six o'clock it is," she said. "I'm sittink down and my man coms in. 'Is the shotters op?' I say. Yes. 'Is the bleck-out op?' I say. Yes. 'So,' I say, 'pop into the kitchin and get me a nice cop tea.' That's all I say. And do you know what my man says?"

"I'm willin' to learn," said Mr. Pinkin.

Mrs. Stusser quivered with indignation. "He says 'Get it yourself,'" she said. "'Podden me,' I say, sweet like two weeks' sugar-ration, 'I dun't think my ears is tellink the troot. Pliz to rippeat.'"

"An' wot did 'e say?" said Mrs. Pinkin.

"He dun't *say* it," said Mrs. Stusser. "He shouts! 'Get it yourself! Get it yourself!' So bafore no time we are shoutink at both of us hammer and tongues."

Someone knocked timidly at the door. It was Mr. Stusser. He edged himself into the living-room and smiled hopefully at his wife.

"Is advertisink a toot-paste you are?" Mrs. Stusser said icily. "Else dun't waste time smilink at me, Mister Terrible Stusser. Ugha!"

"Come on, now," Mr. Pinkin urged. "Let bygones be bygones."

Mrs. Stusser rose majestically to her feet. "Nut if he should com on bandied knees," she said. "Soch terrible expressions is takink a long time to be gone by." She walked to the door, and turned to look at her husband. "Ugha!" she said. "Goo'bye, ev'rybaddy else." Then she went.

"It'll blow over," said Mr. Pinkin as he sat down to his meal. "Another coupla years an' you'll prob'ly be on speakin' terms agen."

Mr. Stusser shook his head. "I'm fad op!" he said. "Twanty-seven years I'm waitink on Bella by hend or by foot. Is more than too moch; is plenty."

Mr. Pinkin nodded sympathetically.

"That I dun't mind," Mr. Stusser continued, "but since



"She wants a pound—everybody in her Section is getting tattooed."

the Blitzes is something makink me so fad op I should jump myself over Lambet' Britch."

"Does she wake you to ask if you're asleep, same as my missis?" said Mr. Pinkin.

"Nunno," Mr. Stusser said. "Is this: six o'clock, nine o'clock, twelve o'clock, *ev'ry* time, Bella says one sentence like a parrot-bird. 'So,' she says, 'get me a nice cop tea.' So many millions nice cops tea I get I should be a nippy-vaitriss. I'm fad op."

"Terrible!" said Mr. Pinkin.

"Tarrible?" said Mr. Stusser as he rose to go. "Is drastic!"

"Take 'eed, Tillie," Mr. Pinkin said when Mr. Stusser had gone, "alwers look after y'r 'usband so when someone says there's no place like 'ome 'e don't say 'Thank 'eaven' under 'is breff. 'Ullo," he said, "there goes the warnin'. Well, dooty calls." He scrambled into his overcoat and jammed his tin-hat on his head. "Don't ferget," he said, "if they start droppin' things round 'ere, take the beer down to the shelter. So long."

He returned soon after midnight.

"Anythin' doin'?" Mrs. Pinkin inquired sleepily.

"Abserloutly nothin'," said Mr. Pinkin. "You wouldn't 'ave known there was a war on if it 'adn't bin fer the gun-fire an' the shrapnel. But talk about cold! Why, I was that froze that when I caught 'old of a icicle it melted me fingers."

On the following evening he visited Mr. Stusser. "'Ow's things?" he asked.

"Better than bad," Mr. Stusser admitted, "but badder than good."

"Y'know, you oughta join me in fire-watchin'," Mr. Pinkin said. "You'd be comp'ny fer me, an' it 'ud give you a coupla evenin's a week away from Mrs. S."

"Movvellous!" said Mr. Stusser. "On'y two nights a week though?"

"Fair's fair," said Mr. Pinkin. "After all, we're not the on'y two marrid men round 'ere. I'm on dooty agen Fridy, so you can bid a fond adjoo to y'r missis an' 'ave a night on the tiles."

"Grend!" said Mr. Stusser. "Fridy night is by me a red-letter day. Peace in war-time! Beaudiful!"

When the siren sounded on Friday evening Mr. Pinkin led Mr. Stusser to the roof of Cosham House.

"'Ere we are, Stusser ole man," he said. "'Ere's the stirrup-pump, sand, water, an' that thing that's jus' caught you a crack on the back of the 'ead is the long-'andled shovel. This is my seat, so you'd better make y'rself comfy on the sand bucket an' rest y'r back on the stirrup-pump."

Mr. Pinkin and Mr. Stusser waited.

They sat forward and listened. They sat back and listened. Then they just sat.

"Well," said Mr. Pinkin half an hour later. "Seems like they're not runnin' a reg'ler service to-night. 'Ow d'you feel?"

"Feel?" said Mr. Stusser. "Since fifteen minnits I am feelink nothink. Am heppy though."

"Yerse," said Mr. Pinkin. "It do get kinda arectical up 'ere after a bit. Tell you wot, Stusser ole man——"

"Yes?" said Mr. Stusser innocently.

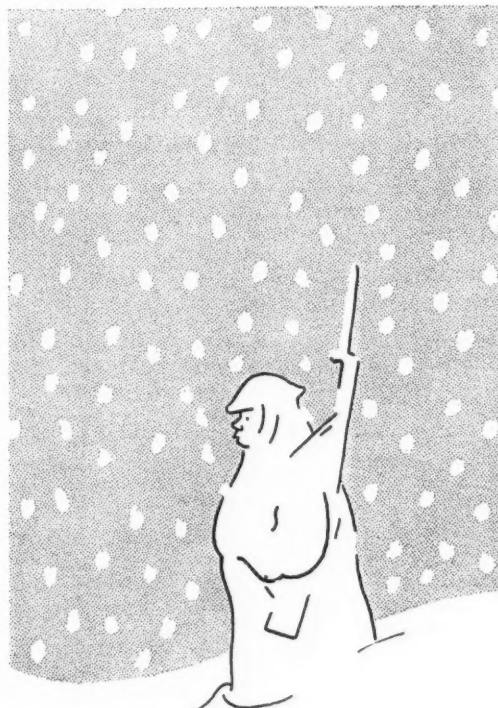
"You know my place," said Mr. Pinkin. "Jus' pop down inter the kitching an' get me a nice cuppa tea."

Mr. Stusser went slowly and sadly downstairs.

"It's crool," Mr. Pinkin said to himself as he waited, "but it's Bevin's orders. 'E'd never fergive me if I let skilled labour like that lie idle."

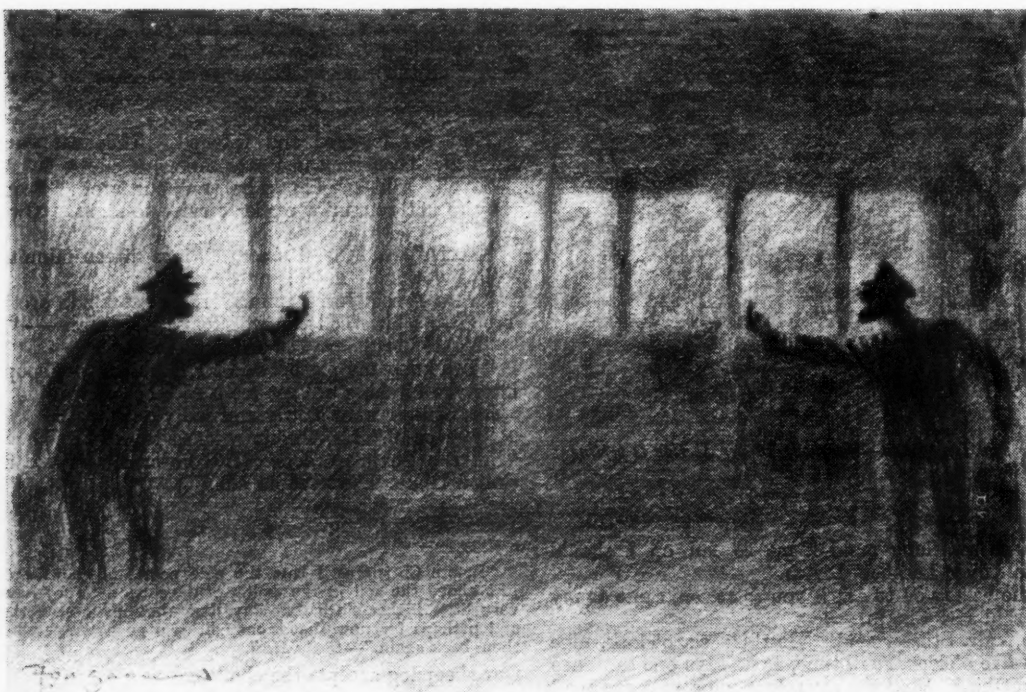
"Before Christmas I saw the pale points of snowdrop blades just above the soil in the shelter of the shrubs. They have lifted very little higher since that day, but they have seen the light, and perhaps for now that is enough. No power on earth can put them back again."—*Daily Mail*.

Our sheepdog accepts the challenge.



J.W. TAYLOR

B.S.T. ON BREDON



"Here, Porter!"

At a Solemn Music

THE air was steeped in rich Mozartian graces;
I liked the band, its nuances and attack;
I liked the players with their earnest faces,
And the conductor too, I liked his back;
With these delights I had been long acquainted
But one new item met my startled gaze,
A simple back-cloth, somewhat crudely painted,
A garden scene of old forgotten days.

Yes, there it hung, incongruous and garish,
Left for convenience of the evening show
(Which, I'd been told, if somewhat light was fairish,
Though jazz I personally hold is low).
It drew the eye behind our nimble drummer
And cast, I must admit, a subtle spell;
One thought instinctively of high midsummer
And things like amaranth and asphodel.

And as I looked into that old-world garden
I was withdrawn; I passed into that scene;
Band and conductor—may I ask their pardon—
Were for the nonce as though they had not been.
I stood on yonder path; in those twin bowers
Calmly I peered; the air was warm and bland
Laden with scents from that long wealth of flowers,
Such flowers as never were on sea or land.

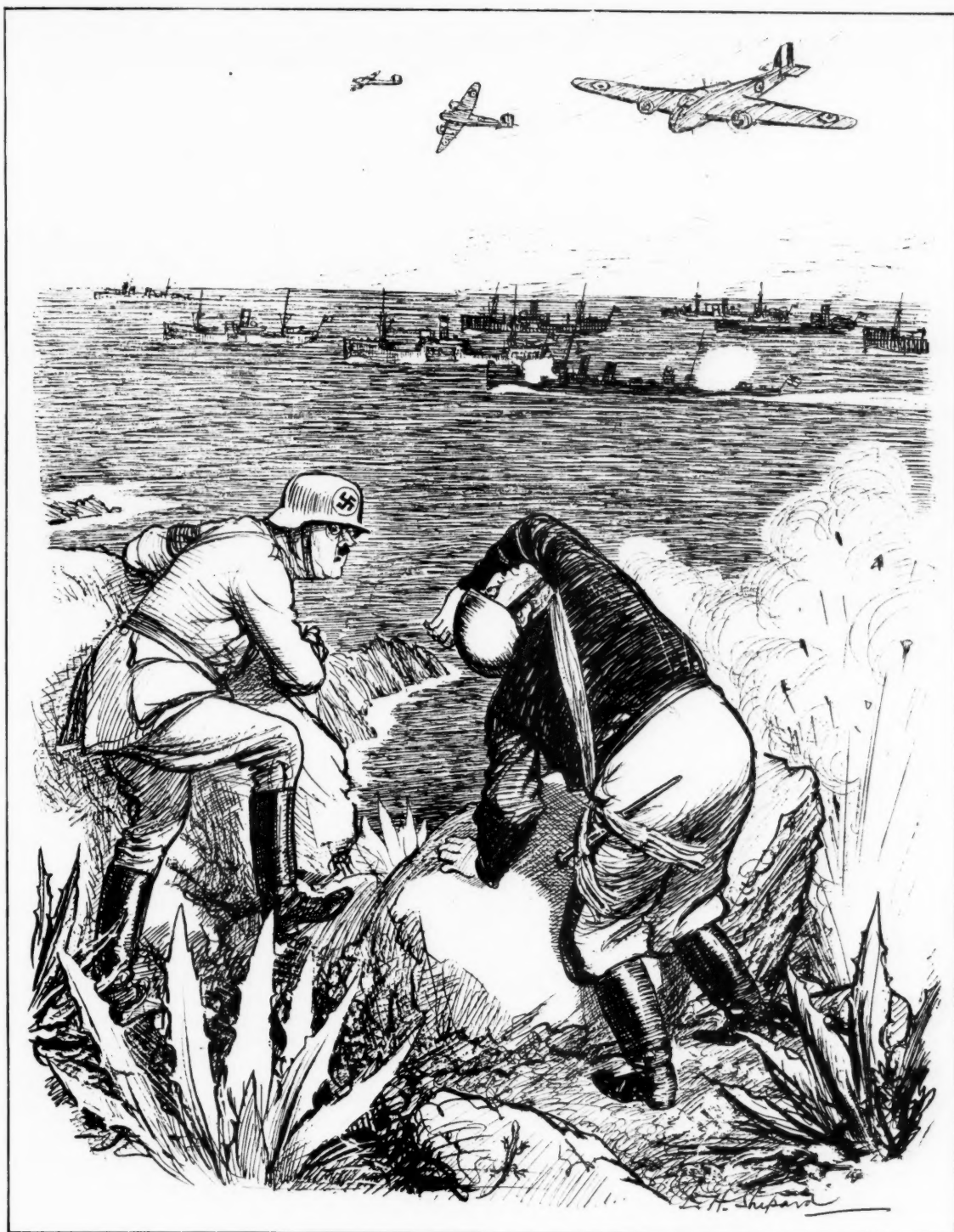
Through an old grey wall by an ancient gateway
I wandered up some broad and shallow stairs—
What stairs and what a gate!—which led me straightway
To an expanse of—shall we say?—parterres

Where lovely ladies of high rank and titles
In period costumes as you see in books
Moved on the lawns with men who stapped their vitals,
Beshrewed themselves, took snuff, and said "Gadzooks!"

Then, to my shame, I somehow felt like smoking,
Sought for a pipe, and from my pocket drew
A snuff-box and—believe me, I'm not joking—
I found myself attired in palest blue
Of richest silk; my head had a peruke on;
You'd have admired my hose and flowered vest;
Odds Gramikins! not all the wealth of Yukon
Could have turned out a person bravelier drest.

And there were great elms and a lordly cedar;
Birds sang innumerosely and cuckoos cucked
(And, just this once, let me remind the reader
How well, in that fair throng, I must have looked),
And a still lake was there with proud swans on it.
A radiant dream, but all too sweet to last;
That orchestra, my malison upon it,
Finished its labours with a rousing blast.

In one sharp flash my bliss was shattered rudely;
And there I saw a stagey back-cloth hang
Showing a garden painted somewhat crudely,
Bare ruined quires where late the sweet birds sang.
And I went out and—odd how memory lingers—
As the last heel-tap to my sorry cup,
Felt for my jewelled snuff-box, and my fingers
Closed on my homely briar. So I lit up. DUM-DUM.



TROUBLE IN SICILY

"I want you to stop calling it Mare Nostrum, and call it Unsere Sec."
"Need I call it either?"



Mr. PUNCH'S HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND

(Registered under the War Charities Act, 1940)

THIS Fund, which was originally started in order to purchase supplies of raw material and distribute them to Voluntary Working Parties for the Hospitals, has already sent out a very large quantity of Knitting Wool, Unbleached Calico and Velvex, as well as many other materials of all varieties, to be made up into comforts for the wounded.

The number of casualties now caused by the indiscriminate bombing of London and our other great cities has made it necessary to extend the operation of our Fund to the provision of medical and surgical supplies for civilian hospitals.

At the same time the severity of winter is causing a renewed demand on behalf of all the Services—especially amongst the men whose duty lies in exposed situations—for Balaclava helmets, gloves, mittens, woollen waistcoats, and the like.

Mr. Punch, in expressing his very sincere gratitude for the generous help already given by subscribers, renews therefore his appeal both for the sake of the Fighting Services and of civilians who have suffered from the ruthless barbarity of the enemy, in the hope that plenty of supplies may be available for all now that the hardest and coldest weather has set in.

Though we know well that these are days of great financial difficulty, we yet ask you, those who can, to send some donation, large or small, according to your means, to PUNCH HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Washington Up to Date

WHEN I arrived at the station I found that the 11.8 train, which used to get to London at 12.20, would not under war conditions arrive until 12.55—too late for me to get to my aunt's at Ealing for lunch. To placate the old lady I decided to send her a telegram, and made my way to the station telegraph office. If there is one thing which my aunt deplores it is the extravagance of the younger generation. The telegram therefore had to be short and inexpensive. Now a clear and concise telegram, as everybody knows, requires time for experiment and a lavish expenditure of thought. I could afford neither. I wrote "VERY SORRY MISSED TRAIN ARRIVE TEA," and tapped at the sliding window which hid the operator from the gaze of the public.

A thin, cadaverous, solemn-looking fellow answered my knock and received my form. "Missed your train, have you?" he said.

Thinking that this was an unusual but amiable conversational opening, I answered pleasantly "Yes."

"Which one?" he asked.

"The 11.8," said I.

"But it's not yet come in," he said; "you can't have missed it."

"No, I know that," said I, "but I find that it is due to arrive 35 minutes later in London than I had anticipated."

"But that doesn't mean you've missed the train," he said.

"No," I admitted, getting rather bored with him, "but it answers my purpose to say so."

"But it's an untruth," he said.

"Oh, come along!" said I. "How much is it?"

"But I can't send it," he said.

"Why not?" said I, getting annoyed.

"Because it's a lie," said he.

"What the devil has that to do with you?" said I. "Even admitting, which I don't, that it is a lie, what business is it of yours?"

"I can't send it if it's a lie," said he.

"My good man," said I, endeavouring to control myself, "I am not asking your opinion. This telegram is my responsibility. Will you or will you not send it?"

"I can't," he said. "I'm very sorry, but I can't send it as it's not true. You see," he added, "I'm a Plymouth Brother."

"I don't see," said I; "and I don't care if you're a Buff Orpington. I shall report your conduct at once."

I stamped out of the room and made

my way to the station-master's office. The station-master, a bovine, heavily built man, was sitting at his desk in his shirt-sleeves, drinking a cup of steaming tea.

"Yes, Sir?" he said.

"I want to send a telegram," I said with some asperity, "and your office clerk refuses to dispatch it."

"Ah!" he said, and a faint cloud settled on his stupidly cheerful face. "What is the matter?"

"I find," said I patiently and with emphasis, "that the 11.8 train does not now arrive at Euston until 12.55. I am due for lunch at Ealing at 1 P.M. As I cannot keep my appointment I

desire to inform my hostess that I shall arrive later."

"Yes, Sir," said the station-master. "I can't see anything wrong in that."

"No," said I. "That's just it, but your clerk refuses to send it."

"But why?"

"Because as the 11.8 hasn't yet come in he says I haven't lost it."

"Ah," said the station-master.

"And," I continued, "he says I am inviting him to tell a lie, and he refuses to do so."

"Ah," said the station-master again.

"Well, you see, Sir, he's a Plymouth Brother."

"I don't care," I shouted with



"... then we decided that he was getting too old for toys."



"Think of the monotony—nothing to look at but miles and miles of sand."

exasperation, "if he's a Buff Orpington, and I told him so."

"That wasn't very polite of you," said the station-master reprovingly. "You shouldn't have called him a fowl name."

"I didn't," I said. "He called himself a Plymouth Brother."

"I don't rightly know what a Plymouth Brother is," said the station-master, "but it isn't a hen, and a Buff Orpington is. I know, 'cos I've got one. Very good laying bird she is too."

"But this is quite ridiculous," said I, getting hot around the collar. "I insist on my telegram being sent, and since you exercise authority here I shall hold you responsible if it is not put through."

"You couldn't write it out a bit differently, could you, Sir?" asked the station-master wistfully.

"I could," said I grimly, "but I'll be — if I will."

"Very well," said the station-master

with a sigh, "I'll come along with you and see what I can do, but he's a difficult chap, Sir. 'Itler and Musso together couldn't get him to go against his conscience."

He thought for a moment, gazed longingly at his tea, tried its temperature with his tongue, decided that it was too hot to swallow at a gulp, poured it out into the saucer and drank it with gusto and satisfaction. Then he put on his coat, buttoned it carefully, got down his hat from a peg which was a bit too high for him, so that he had to jump twice before it responded to his touch by falling on the floor; recovered it, brushed it carefully with his sleeve, searched in his pockets and the drawers of his desk for the key of his office, locked the office door, tried it to see if it were locked, hesitated as if waiting for something, and said "Come along, Sir."

Together we made our way to the telegraph office. The station-master

tapped at the sliding window and said loudly "George?"

"Yes, Sir?" said the operator, appearing so suddenly in the aperture that he must have been standing there awaiting our arrival. "Yes, Sir?"

"Look 'ere, George," said the station-master ingratiatingly, "just you send off the gentleman's telegram like a good chap. He says he'll report the matter if his telegram doesn't go through, and that will 'urt me as much as it will 'urt you."

"I can't, Harry," said the operator miserably. "I'd do anything for you, but I can't tell a lie."

We appeared to have reached an impasse when a familiar noise filtered through my exasperation to my ears. The station-master heard it too. He breathed heavily with relief and smiled from ear to ear.

"Why that's all right, George," he said cheerfully, "you can send it now. That's the 11.8 going out. He 'as missed it."

War Commentary

THERE was a swish of skis and a flurry of snow. A moment later, 'tsiguy poked his head around the door with an engaging grin. "Me v'là!" he announced breathlessly.

"Bo'jour, 'tsiguy," I said. "Comme ça va?"

"Ça va bien, m'sieu."

"Come on in then, and tell me the news."

He entered and shook out three days' mail and papers from his satchel on to the table. I was barred from Ste. Rosalie by a two-day blizzard, and the radio had been off. The power cable had parted somewhere up the line, and I was out of touch with whatever had been going on in the world.

'Tsiguy accepted a cup of coffee, sat down on the wood-box by the stove, and began to thaw himself out. Presently, his boots steaming and his chubby face aglow, he set down his cup. "Big news from Montréal, m'sieu! We 'ave beaten the Italians at a place called Bardia. It must 'ave been a big victory, because George the Greek gave me a double chocolate soda when I told 'im."

George Bitsos, who keeps our local restaurant, is remarkable even among his fellow Hellenes for his thrift, so I could imagine the magnitude of the Italian defeat. A double chocolate retails at fifteen cents.

"That's very good news, 'tsiguy. What do you think of your chances now?"

He pulled a long face. "I think it will be over before I am old enough, m'sieu."

He is only twelve, and so, fond as I am of Master François Xavier Bilodeau and his military ambitions, I sincerely hoped he was right.

"Anything else new?"

"Oui, m'sieu. We 'ave 'ad a letter from 'poléon."

This was indeed an event. Napoléon, 'tsiguy's brother, is a lance-corporal in the Fusiliers Laurentides (2nd Canadian Division), and Ste. Rosalie's main contribution to the war effort. True, we sent along twenty thousand dollars cash to buy a Spitfire, but 'poléon was the backbone of our ice-hockey team.

"What does he say, 'tsiguy?"

"Oh! 'e says that England is colder than Ste. Rosalie, that 'e 'as played in four games and scored five goals, and that there are no spittoons on the English trains—why is that, m'sieu?"

"In England they don't spit on the trains, 'tsiguy."

"No, m'sieu?" He was polite, but none the less incredulous. "Oh, and 'poléon says that they 'ave been near the sea, waiting for the Allemands, but they 'ave not seen any yet, only their aeroplanes. 'poléon says the first one to see an Allemand will win five dollars."

He pondered deeply for a moment and shook his head. "This is a funny war, m'sieu."

I thought so too, but didn't commit myself. As the only Englishman in these parts, I am held directly responsible for the conduct of the war, so I have to be very careful what I say about it.

"M'sieu le Curé was explaining it to us this morning, and 'e said it was just like a game of checkers."

"Chess, 'tsiguy, surely?"

"No, m'sieu, checkers," he insisted.

If M. le Curé had said checkers, then checkers it was so far as Ste. Rosalie was concerned.

"You get all the little checkers off the board very fast," he continued, "and then you move your kings very slow, m'sieu, and wait for the other fellow to make a mistake."

I sometimes play draughts with 'tsiguy, and have often wondered what was his formula for success. "But what if the other fellow has more kings than you, 'tsiguy?"

I might have known that he would have his answer pat.

"Y a de bon, m'sieu!" he answered triumphantly, "'e 'as more chances of making mistakes!"



Ode to an Egg

AN egg!
 An egg!
 An egg!
 My hat, an egg!
 I feel like dancing. I shall have to sing.
 I did not bully, bribe or even beg—
 An egg! I never *thought* of such a thing.
 I simply said
 To the man in the breakfast-car
 Of this delightful train,
 The 8.19
 (Which left at 9.20 and now has stopped again),
 I simply said "What
 Food have you got?"
 Expecting little,
 Demanding naught,
 Ready to suffer
 As a good citizen ought;
 Ready to hear with quiet brow:
 "We did have kippers but we have none now;
 Then there was fish-cakes, but fish-cakes is off;
 A bomb fell on the porridge and the peas;
 Our only sausage met a Molotoff;
 You should have come last week when there was
 cheese.
 But anyhow, what's all this talk of feeding?
 Do you not know there is a war proceeding?"
 Instead
 He said
 "Bacon and eggs,"



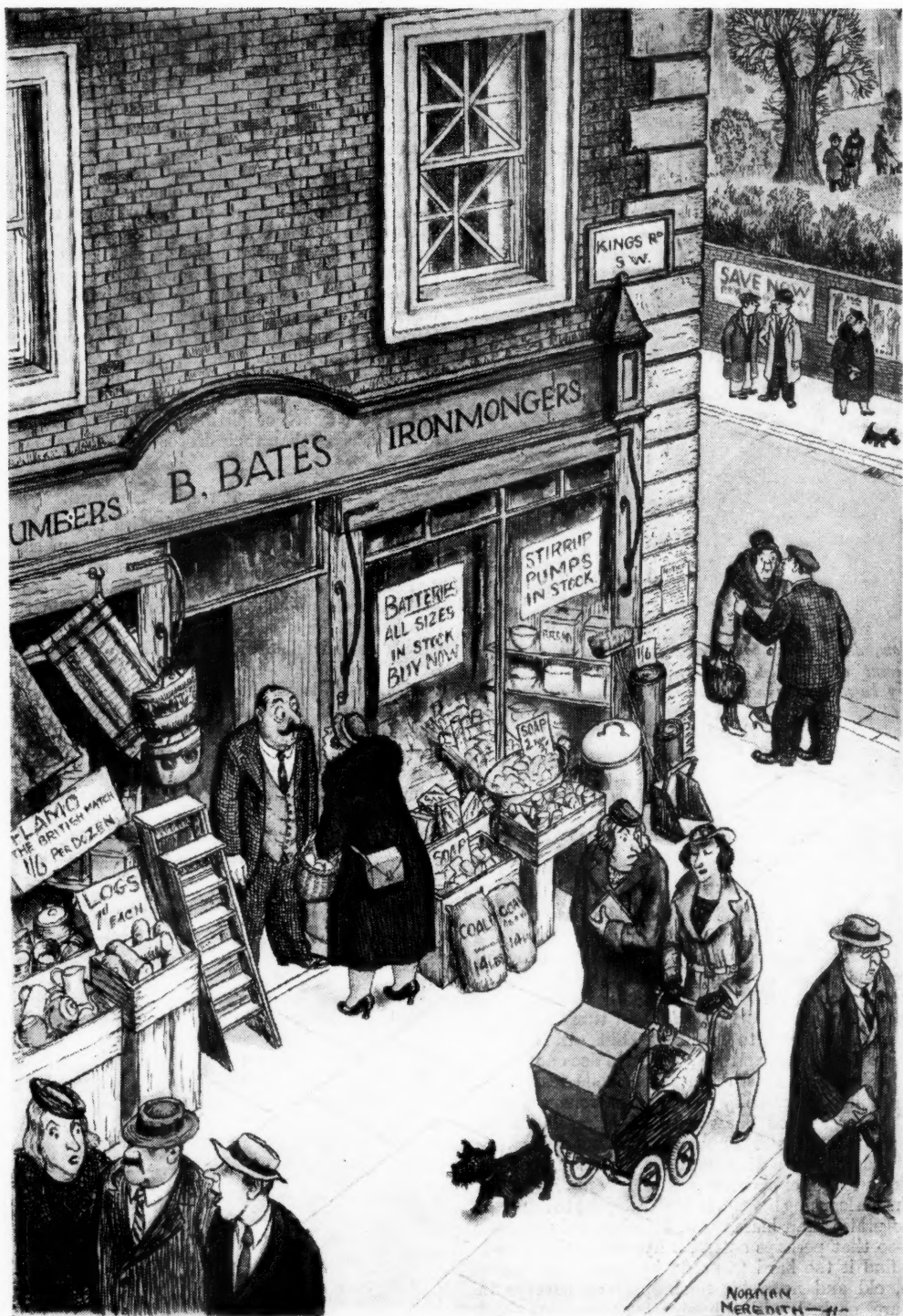
*"What beats ME is why no one thought of making
 our blinking tin hats out of brass."*

Casual, cool,
 As if it were the rule,
 A thing of routine
 On the 8.19
 That all on two legs
 Have bacon and eggs—
 Eggs!

"Fry it," I said, "but let me see it first,
 Unmarred, unburst.
 Let me behold that rare and pleasant shape
 So seldom seen
 That now, when men remark some maiden's grace
 And praise 'the perfect oval' of her face,
 I gape
 And leap to meet her.
 Nor does it seem
 In these hard days
 So wild a dream,
 So queer a phrase,
 When lovers tell
 Their Jane or Nell
 That they could eat her——"
 He said "Well, is it boiled or fried? Decide."

"O Egg!" I continued,
 "Unique device,
 The neatest bit of storage ever done;
 O Egg!
 Let us think twice
 Before we treat you as a theme for fun.
 We did not praise or prize enough your worth
 Before, almost, you vanished from the earth.
 With what rude jest
 We fouled your mother's nest.
 We sniffed at second-raters, when we had one;
 But now we walk a mile to buy a bad one!
 What simple thing holds such surprises?
 What earthly thing
 Can please us in so many guises,
 From churl to King?
 O Egg!
 Stay of the island breed—
 Or half a stay,
 For bacon, you'll concede,
 Counts, in a way—
 What are these symbols stuck about the town,
 These hearts and diamonds, this lion and crown?
 Good, ancient stuff,
 But not enough,
 For still the whole great tale is not set down.
 O Builder! O!
 O Architect! O Decorator!
 When the new world takes wings,
 When the New England springs
 From fire and crater,
 Grant that we still may gape, as now we gape,
 At this historic, this *imperial* shape.
 On every scroll, on every arch and column
 Let there be carved, I beg,
 As large as any lion, and as solemn,
 A glorious Egg.

Young man, I am so moved by what I say,
 I think I will not have an egg to-day." A. P. H.



"I want a dozen egg-cups, please—and do you know where I can get some eggs?"



"Now, dear, you're quite clear what you've to do in the event of invasion, or gas, or high-explosive or incendiary bombs, or a combination of any two or more of them?"

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Just Judge

As a dramatic critic Mr. DESMOND MACCARTHY has attained a unique position without any aid from the customary arts of self-advertisement. *Drama* (PUTNAM, 9/6) presents some three score and ten of his shrewd, urbane, well-balanced, exacting yet tolerant critiques extending over the last twenty-five years. "Don't do your thinking in the theatre; surrender yourself to the play. Think afterwards," is his advice to both critic and playgoer. He does not allow himself to be bored or even disdain the facile tear. His tastes are catholic. He can enjoy without patronage a good Edgar Wallace or a good Shaw without being taken in. He is never the merely entertaining reporter, but always the appraiser of the play, the acting and the production, bringing to his job knowledge, experience and understanding of his world; wears his learning lightly, to illustrate, not to impress; is readier to praise than blame and, blaming, sedulous not to wound—so that perhaps actors, a hypersensitive breed, should not find it too hard to profit by him. He knows his classics, old and new—his Shakespearean surveys in particular are packed with illuminating comment—and because he is a master of obedient words these notices have a freshness and permanent interest rare in such assortments.

The Dry Bones Live.

It may be the layman's traditional pose—the attitude of *Truthful James* to the Society upon the Stannislow—but caves with fossil-bones in them, and the portentous deductions arising therefrom, have usually struck him as deadlly dull or faintly ridiculous. Here, however, is a book on *Prehistoric England* (BATSFORD, 8/6) which is neither: a modest, comprehensive, intelligent and captivating volume with outstandingly good photographs, many of them aerial. Mr. GRAHAME CLARK is as far from exploiting what he calls the "pitiful relics" of the obscurer Ages as he is from neglecting the abundant vestiges of more recent ones. He shatters several cherished traditions—notably the scythes on BOADICEA's chariot-wheels. But he presents genuine remains of bygone civilizations in terms of the men who bequeathed them to us: the men who dwelt in marsh villages; entrenched themselves on palisaded hill-tops; tamed the first animals; grew the first crops; and grubbed up indigenous metals to be deported by foreign adventurers. It comes as rather a shock to find our early carrying trade mainly in the hands of aliens; but our rude forefathers had at least the knack of getting more out of England per head for themselves than their descendants manage to do to-day.

America Sees England.

It is, after all, only poetic justice that the war against totalitarianism should be eminently, on our side, a war of individual exploits. Two American reporters, Mr. ALLAN A. MICHIE and Mr. WALTER GRAEBNER, stress this aspect—the St. George-and-the-Dragon aspect—in their preface to a baker's dozen of heroic deeds originally transcribed for the American magazine *Life*. These were all taken down from the lips of their chief actors: one of the last young territorials to leave the jetty at Dunkirk; the Chief Petty Officer and Signalman of the *Scotstoun*; a bomber fresh from Duisberg; a Lieutenant whose submarine torpedoed a German transport. Civilians too—the woman whose really home-made home was bombed out of existence; a fireman from the blazing docks; a 19-year-old typist whose first-aid work won her the George Medal—tell the story of *Their Finest Hour* (ALLEN AND UNWIN, 7/6). It is the real thing—gallant, resourceful, unsparing in devotion, with



"Hello, Forces! Now for a programme of regimental marches."

a humour which, accompanying a baled-out airman to temporary repose among the scarlet-runners of an allotment, looks like accompanying the vast majority of his fellow-countrymen to the victorious end of the war.

Chiftane Mervellus

Every intelligent man (it is said) has two countries—his own and France; and for a patriotic Scot, born when the star of Tudor England was in the ascendant, the second was probably the more important. France helped Scotland when Scotland was too distracted to help herself. Yet the francophile Duke of ALBANY, though not to be confounded with the wicked uncle of *The Fair Maid of Perth*, has had nearly as bad a press. Now, however, Miss MARIE W. STUART, with a sound appreciation of his cosmopolitan life in Scotland, France and Italy, and its cosmopolitan sources in Scots, French and Latin, has given a detailed and doughty picture of *The Scot Who Was a Frenchman* (HODGE, 12/6). Born in France of a French mother, JEHAN STEWART served both his father's country and his mother's with consistent fidelity. As Governor to JAMES V he scandalized the Scots by the (usually French) money he spent, by his Italian actors and French singers, and by his tolerance for his royal nephew's "pettis and beistis." A fascinating compound of mediæval tough and renaissance statesman, he well repays the excellent work his biographer has put into this effective and scholarly biography.

For England, Home and Beauty

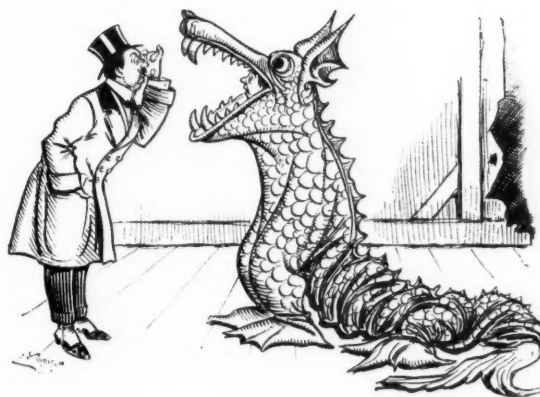
While the young are fighting it is one of the obvious duties of the middle-aged to see that there is something left to fight for. The enemy action which has destroyed so large a part of the *Chiltern Country* (BATSFORD, 8/6) is our own—a suburban penetration which takes no account of the creed and culture of the penetrated. For the real country life is a creed and a culture—a faith in the land and a traditional way of expressing that faith. And it is because Mr. H. J. MASSINGHAM perceives this only too poignantly, that he has written a distressing as well as an enthusiastic book. True, he calls in scraps of unspoilt Oxfordshire to redress the ruin of Bucks and Herts. He can still show you an impenetrable yew-forest. But there is only one bodger turning beech-trees into chair-legs where in 1900 there were thirty; and very soon all Chiltern craftsmen will inherit the epitaph of a Nettlebed smith:

*"My coals are spent, my iron's gone,
My nails are drove, my work is done."*

Unless of course the reprieve for which this book and its beautiful photographs so eloquently plead comes in time.

Gifts from France

Maigret is a difficult detective to describe, but that may be because he is a Frenchman and/or so unlike the sleuths



Manager (to dragon). "WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS? WHERE'S YOUR HIND LEGS?"

Dragon. "THEY'VE ENLISTED, SIR."

C. Harrison, January 27th, 1915

of fiction. He drifts about, sometimes grumpily, sometimes sadly, and has a gentle knack of asking questions. He is an artist at his job and, one suspects, a bit of a non-practising poet too. Otherwise he would not (his investigations over) have hunched himself up in the dark on the quarter-deck of an unlucky fishing-boat and told himself the story of the voyage—"It was on such a night as this, colder because spring had scarcely begun"—instead of reconstructing the crime conventionally. We have the pleasure of meeting him twice and in different moods, for M. GEORGES SIMENON's book, *Maigret Keeps a Rendezvous* (ROUTLEDGE, 8/-), contains two novels. In the first the Inspector acts unofficially for the sake of a friend; in the second he is sent by the police to the village of his birth, and watches a murder at mass. Here again the reconstruction is brilliant and dramatic, though *Maigret* scarcely speaks as he sits side-by-side with the murderer in candle-light, listening to the summing-up by the dead woman's son, who is in an exalted state of drunkenness. We are promised more by the publishers, and are grateful to them, to the author and to MARGARET LUDWIG, the translator, who must have done her part well.

Mr. Punch on Tour

THE Exhibition of the original work of Modern *Punch* Artists will be on view at the Public Art Gallery, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, from January 18th to February 15th. Admission will be free.



"I grant you it MIGHT be a bit awkward if the invasion came up Cherry Lane instead of the High Street."

Smith Minor, Life-Saver

I WONDER if the gentel reader has ever saved a Life? I don't mean jest in his or her mind, that's easy, I've saved dozens that way, such as, i.e.,:-

(1) a child falls off a horse and you throw off your coat and rush into the road and sieze her up jest before another horse comes along that wuold of gone over her, or

(2) an old woman falls into a lion's den jest before feading time and you throw off your coat and jump in after her and throw her out jest before the lion finnishs licking its chops, they do, I've seen them, or

(3) a German razes his gun to shoot Mr. Churchill when you throw off your coat and rush in between them to get the bullit but luckerly it jest misses, or

I don't mean animals, such as, i.e.,:-

(1) a mouse out of a trap, I say you aught to save them, anyhow I always do, or

(2) a bird that falls out of its nest, and you catch it, once I did, onestly, I could hardly beleive it, or

(3) you see a pore panting fox and then a hunter comes along and says "Witch way did it go?" and you tell

him the wrong way, well, how wuold he like to be chaced?

No, what I mean is a Humane Being that, but for you, wuold be, if you don't mind a bit of poetry, there won't be any more,

"Below the cold and chilly ground,
Knownst only by a flower-strune mound."

I've got to be onest and say that Greene (he's another boy) helped me with the last line, I not being sure how to spell "strune."

Well, I tell you, when you do that,* it makes you feel jolly solenm.

It began in a very curius way, I mean in a very ordinary way whitch was curius when you think of what folowed. Say a thing starts with a bang, well, you say, "Hallo," and expekt something, but who wuold think anything wuold hapen jest out of posting a letter?

I was staying with some poeple who had asked me to stay with them, I don't know why, but of corse I can't tell you what town it was in becorse we're not suposed to. One of the poeple, a doughter, said,

"Wuold you like to go to the pillar-box at the corner for me?"

"I'll go," I said, but I wasn't going to say I'd like to becorse one tries to be truthful even in small things.

It always seams a bit funny to me when poeple say wuold you like to do a thing, becorse if it's nice why don't they do it themselves?

"It's at the corner," she said.

"So you said," I said.

"So I did," she said.

"Well, where's the letter?" I said.

"On my dressing-table," she said.

"Wuold you like to go up and fetch it for me?"

"I will," I said, and went.

Well, the pillar-box was 192 steps away, I always count, but nothing hapened untill I was 47 steps on the way back, it might have been 48, but one or the other. Then I stoped suddenly. Why, the gentel reader will ask? I will tell him or her. I heard a cry come out of a house. Actully it came out of an open window.

Then I heard voices. One was a man's and the other was a lady's, and this is what they said. I'm not sure if I'm remembering it quite right becorse I found myself in a swett and your mind goes funny when you perspire, but you can take it from me the folowing was the idea, i.e.,:-

Lady: "You are hurting me!"

Man: "I mean to, you unfaithfull huissy!"

* Save a Humane Being

Lady: "Let go, George, let go!"

(NOTE.—We can now call him George.)

George: "Tell me his name!"

Lady: "Never!"

George: "If you don't, Alice, do you know what I'll do?"

(NOTE.—We can now call her Alice.)

Alice: "What?"

George: "I'll break every bone in your deceatfull little boddy!"

Alice: "No!"

George: "Yes!"

Alice: "No!"

George: "Yes!"

Alice: "My God!"

(NOTE.—I'm not sure weather anybody of my age may write the above word in full in a story, even if it is true, but if he maynt then the printer can put a capitol G and two stars, like they do with some other words you mustn't print, and you'll know if he does it by if he's done it.)

George: "You unfaithfull huissy!"

Well, one suposed she had done something she shuoldn't of, though of corse one didn't know what it was, but weather she was a huissy or not I didn't see why she should be hurt, somehow I can't stand that, it doesn't matter who it is, why, once I hit a man who was tuisting a small boy's arm even though the small boy was a Negro, cuold he help that? "Supose you'd been born one?" I said to the man. He seamed surprized. You see, he hadn't thort of it. Why, for all we can do, we might be born pea-hens.*

Well, anyhow, what I did was this. I threw off my coat and I lept in through the open window.

Oh, there's one other thing I must tell you if you think that funy. I have a coussin named Alice, and though it wasn't likely to be this one, she being in Canada, you never know, and if it was, whitch it wasn't, well, one has to protekt one's family.

I said just now that the man who tuisted the Negro's arm was surprized, well, that was nothing to the surprize of these other poeple. You see I didn't only leap through the window, I roared, too, and "beared my lips," as they say, the reason being that ordinerly I have one of those rather quiet faces which you have to alter to make impresive, if you know what I mean. And, after all, when you come to think of it, it would give anybody a bit of a start to see anybody else shooting in at a window like that, why, I might have been a bomb.

Well, anyway, George was so surprized that he took his fingers off

Alice's throte, that's where they were, and Alice fainted. That might have been alright if she hadn't hit her head against the corner of a table when she went down.

After that there was a bit of confushion, and though George and I said a lot of things I don't remember any of them, until we got to this part.

"What the something something something," said George.

"That kind of talk won't help," I said.

"Look what you've done," he said.

"Look what you were going to do," I said.

"What was I going to do?" he said.

"What you said," I said. "I heard you."

"You something something something," he said, "you heard us rehearsing a play."

"Oh," I said.

And then I said,

"Is she dead?"

"Yes," he said, "and you've killed her."

"In that case I know what to do," I said. "You must go for a policeman and a doctor, you have to get both, and I'll stay here till you come back, you neadn't think I'll run away, I'm not that kind."

He looked at me rather hard, and then he looked at the corpse, that's what they are the momint they're finished, and then he suddinly turned and went out of the room, and of corse I thort he'd gorn for the policeman and the doctor.

Well, I don't mind telling you my knees went week, and at first after the door had closed I jest stood and spun, I mean my brain did, but then all at once, like a thort out of a sky, if you know what I mean, well, the thort came, and my forrid grew damp again in a new way and I fairly dripped with hope. You see, I've begun studying First Ade, and alththough I can only remember some of the bones, we've got dozens, I've read the chapter about Rescusscitation, and Greene and I have practiced on each other. What you have to do is to sit on the corpse in a certin way and then work the arms and legs up and down in another certin way, and as there's a limit to what even a corpse can stand, if it can it sits up.

Well, anyhow, I thort I'd try it.

So I sat on the corpse of Alice, and I worked her, or its, arms and legs, keaping them going up and down becorse you mustn't stop once you begin, and after the 468th time, it sat up.

I'm not going to pretend it didn't give me a funny fealing, it did, but with First Ade you mustn't think of what you feal, for another thing you

have to do the momint you can is to chear the patient. Well, this seamed the momint, so I said, "What Ho," not being able to think of anything else.

Rather luckerly the door opened again then, and George came back with a doctor from the next house, but not a policeman, and said, "Hallo, have you brought her round?"

"No, up," I said.

"How did you do it?" the doctor said.

"By rotating her radius and her fibula, Sir," I said.

"What?" he said.

"Ashpyxia," I said.

"Do you know what you're talking about?" he said.

"No," I said.

"You look sick," he said.

"I feal sick," I said.

And then rather a funny thing hapened. I fainted myself. I expect it was working arms and legs up and down those 468 times.

But it was worth it. When I came to the doctor said I had saved Alice's life—doctors never tell fibs, do they?—and Alice and George promissed to send me a ticket for their play when it came off.

Greene doesn't think I saved her life, becorse but for me I wuoldn't have had to. "All you did," he said, "was to save yourself being hung."

Well, even if that *was* all, it was something.

o o

Reading

ANYONE who takes any account of human nature must have noticed one thing about it. It can't do without reading. Of course people are not *born* able to read. They have to learn. But it all happens when they are too young to do anything about it, so it comes to the same thing; and the result is that they spend most of the rest of their lives reading something or other. I don't of course mean that they read the same thing all the time; that applies only to people who have to dry the washing-up after every meal, in a kitchen where there is a newspaper covering the table by the draining-board. Though even these people have had a break lately, what with saving waste paper.

But mostly people aim at reading something different every time they read. For instance, they get a novel from their library, and they have to pay to get it, and sometimes to walk all the way to the library and back, and as soon as they have time they sit down and open the book at the first

* I think.—*Author*

page, hold it so that they can see the print, and begin to read. I mean, you can tell they are keen on the idea. But *why* are they reading the novel? *So that they can get to the end as soon as possible.* You can work it out for yourself. As a person turns the pages of a novel, the part to the left of this person, or the *read* part, gets thicker, and the right-hand, or *unread* part, gets correspondingly thinner. Well, in the same way the person reading the novel gets correspondingly happier. You must have seen the smug look on a novel-reader's face when there are so few pages on the right-hand side that they flap up and have to be held down; and the way they sometimes take a quick look at the number on the last page and then sort of square their shoulders and glance up at the clock. This all points to what I was saying—that they are aiming to get it finished. Why? So that they can take it back to the library, get another, and begin again.

Psychologists have tried to ferret out what is behind all this, but as usual they haven't helped much. Some of them say that novel-readers read a novel not because of the novel but because of all the other novel-readers; psychologists call it the competitive instinct, or the instinct which used to make butchers nicer than post-offices. Other scientists say that it is the heritage of civilized man never to be content with what he has but to hope that whatever he has next will be better. Other psychologists, again, simply say that the longer you keep a novel out of a library the more it costs you, and that's all there is to it.

When it comes to magazines it is the

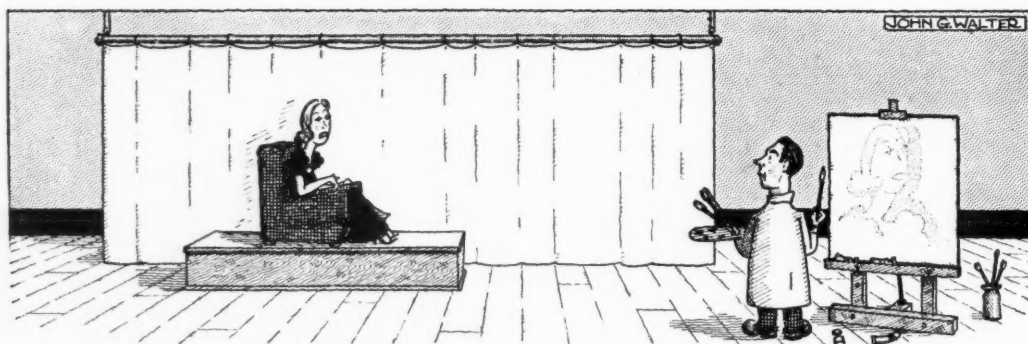
other way round. A magazine reader—that is, a person reading someone else's magazine in someone else's house—tries to spread it out as long as possible. This kind of person can make a twelve-page magazine three months old last for a whole week-end. This class of reader has a sub-division, the sales-catalogue reader, and this sub-division can be divided again to include the people who hold up a meal while they read the analyst's certificate on a bottle of Worcester sauce.

Talking of other people's houses, I expect you must have noticed that when you stay anywhere, whatever other books there are in the bookshelf in your bedroom, there are always *The Willing Horse* and an illustrated guide to Devon or Cornwall. The result is that people starting on *The Willing Horse* always remember that they have read it before in another house they were staying in, so that there is no recorded case of anyone having read it for the first time. I think this is rather interesting. Another interesting thing about reading in bed in someone else's house is how you find yourself opening the window as quietly as possible afterwards so as not to let the people living in the house know you were reading as late as that; and also how, the more you try to open a window quietly, the more it sounds like a window being opened.

Now for newspapers. I don't need to tell you that there are lots of different kinds of newspapers, but I don't know if you've noticed that there are lots of different kinds of people reading them, and you can do quite a lot of deduction by just watching them. For

example, a man wearing a black felt hat and holding a small folded square of newspaper down on his knees and getting his pencil out of his pocket is good at crosswords. A man wearing a black felt hat and holding a small folded square of newspaper eighteen inches from his eyes but not getting the pencil out of his pocket is not so good at crosswords but thinks that to-day he may be. A little boy holding an even smaller folded square of newspaper only six inches from his eyes, and wearing a peaked cap and a lot of brass buttons, is reading about a rough-rider called Jake. A man reading an evening paper on a morning bus, and shaking the middle page out on to the floor, doesn't care about racing. A man reading an evening paper at four in the afternoon and leaning against a lamp-post, with one leg crossed over the other, does. A man sitting at one of those round marble tables in a railway buffet, with three newspapers bunched up on the chair beside him and a flake or two of puff pastry on a plate in front of him doesn't care about anything much, except when his train will be along. And so on.

This brings me, by the way, to a very small sub-division of readers—even smaller than the sub-division that reads the Worcester sauce bottles. You may have noticed people in railway waiting-rooms standing very close to a coloured poster of some old abbey. They are trying to untangle the painter's signature from the bushes in the front. I don't suppose you can really count them as readers; but I wouldn't like to leave them out.



"I wish you'd remember, Miss Featherleigh, that you are sitting for an 'Eat More Parsnips' poster."

NOTICE.—Contributions or Communications requiring an answer should be accompanied by a stamped and addressed Envelope or Wrapper.

The entire Copyright in all Articles, Sketches, Drawings, etc., published in PUNCH is specifically reserved to the Proprietors throughout the countries signatory to the BERNE CONVENTION, the U.S.A., and the Argentine. Reproductions or imitations of any of these are therefore expressly forbidden. The Proprietors will, however, always consider any request from authors of literary contributions for permission to reprint.

CONDITIONS OF SALE AND SUPPLY.—This periodical is sold subject to the following conditions, namely, that it shall not, without the written consent of the publishers first given, be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise disposed of by way of Trade except at the full retail price of 6d.; and that it shall not be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of in a mutilated condition or in any unauthorised cover by way of Trade; or aimed to or as part of any publication or advertising, literary or pictorial matter whatsoever.